

Remarks

The Official Action dated April 7, 2004 has been carefully considered. Consideration of the changes and remarks presented herein and reconsideration of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-20 remain in the present application. Claims 1, 3, 7, 11, 12, 13, and 18 have been amended for purposes of clarifying the claim language. Support for the amendments can be found in the specification, claims and drawings as originally filed. In particular, support for the amendments can be found in the specification at, for example, page 7, line 23 through page 11, line 23. Accordingly, it is believed that these changes do not involve any introduction of new matter, and entry is believed to be in order and is respectfully requested.

Applicants are in receipt of the Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review form and are submitting formal drawings herewith in response thereto. These drawings are substantively the same as the drawings originally filed, except that FIG. 5 has been amended herein to correct the spelling of the word "default 636" (it was spelled "defualt 636" on the original), and FIGS. 8 and 9 have been amended herein to switch the "last name" and "first name" columns (which were incorrectly switched on the original).

Rejections Under 35 USC § 103

Claims 1-7 and 9-13 were rejected under the argument they are unpatentable over Eng (US2001/0039549) in view of Brown (US 6501491), claims 14-20 were rejected under the argument that they are unpatentable over Eng, and claim 8 was rejected under the argument it is unpatentable over Eng in view of Brown and further in view of Prompt (US2001-0034733). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections as there are elements of the claims not taught or suggested by any of the cited references, whether considered alone or in any arguable combination.

For example, the claims of the present application all recite a directory shell which contains directory references. The cited Eng reference relates to an object oriented interface to a directory service. The cited Brown reference relates to management of directory objects within a directory service, and in particular to an extensible common data access user interface for a directory service. The Prompt reference relates to a hierarchical/relational translation system for enabling information from unrelated heterogeneous relational computing systems to be accessed over a hierarchical computing system, and in one embodiment, the hierarchical/relational translation system includes a virtual directory server for capturing information in the nature of relational database schema and metadata.

Accordingly, Applicants found no teaching or suggestion in the references of a number of the claim elements. In particular, independent claim 1 recites a directory shell including directory references referencing two or more directories, wherein the directory references identify which directories that the directory shell can access. Independent claim 7 recites creating a directory shell comprising one or more categories, wherein the directory shell comprises one or more directory references, each directory reference being associated with a directory and including data specific to the directory, wherein the directory reference identifies which directories the directory shell may access. Independent claim 11 recites creating a directory shell comprising one or more categories, wherein the directory shell comprises one or more directory references, wherein the directory references identify which directories the directory shell may access. Independent claim 12 recites creating a directory shell comprising one or more categories, wherein the directory shell comprises one or more directory references, each directory reference being associated with a directory and including data specific to the directory. Finally, independent claim 13 recites one or more directories, each directory comprising a plurality of classes with attributes and a plurality of objects instantiated from said classes, wherein said objects comprise a plurality of data associated

with the attributes, and a directory shell associated with said one or more directories and including one or more directory references.

Applicants found no teaching or suggestion in the references of, for example, the directory shell aspects recited by these claims for management of directories. In contrast, the references all appear to be focused on the use of a directory or directory services, rather than the management of directories through use of a directory shell. An obviousness rejection is not proper if the alleged combination does not teach or suggest all of the claim elements. MPEP § 2143.

Moreover, all of the claims recite that the directory shell includes directory references, and in some claims it is specified that the directory references identify which directories the directory shell may access. Because Applicants found no teaching or suggestion of the recited directory shells, Applicants likewise found no teaching or suggestion in the cited references of such directory references or of the identification of directories which a shell may access. Moreover, claim 1 recites a directory driver for each of the directories, wherein each directory driver is operable to provide information to allow the directory interface to communicate with the directory. Applicants found no teaching or suggestion in the references of the use of directory drivers in combination with a directory shell system such as recited in claim 1.

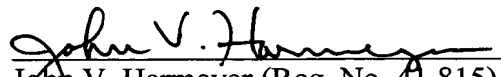
Furthermore, as for the attempted combinations of the references, even if the references did disclose various elements of the claims (although several are missing as detailed above), the mere fact that prior art could be combined to result in a claimed invention would not have made the combination obvious unless the prior art suggests the desirability of the combination. In re Mills, 16 U.S.P.Q.2d 1430 (Fed. Cir. 1990). In other words, there still must be evidence that "a skilled artisan, confronted with the same problems as the inventor and with no knowledge of the claimed invention, would select the elements from the cited

prior art references *for combination in the manner claimed.*" In re Rouffet, 47 U.S.P.Q.2D 1453, 1456 (Fed. Cir. 1998) (emphasis added); see also In re Werner Kotzab, 55 U.S.P.Q.2D 1313, 1317 (Fed. Cir. 2000) ("[A] rejection cannot be predicated on the mere identification . . . of individual components of claimed limitations. Rather, particular findings must be made as to the reason the skilled artisan, with no knowledge of the claimed invention, would have selected these components for combination in the manner claimed."). There has been no showing of a motivation or suggestion for making the argued combination of references, and Applicants found no teaching or suggestion in the cited references to combine their teachings to arrive at the invention as defined by the respective claims.

Accordingly, for at least the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the independent claims are patentably distinct from the cited reference, and it is also submitted that the dependent claims are also patentably distinct for at least these reasons. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn.

It is believed that the above represents a complete response to the rejections and that the present application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and an early allowance are requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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